DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 490 PS 022 233

AUTHOR Ahmeduzzaman, M.
TITLE Ethnic Preschoolers: How Their Fathers Can Be More Involved?
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Anaheim, CA, November 10-13, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Blacks; Cultural Differences; *Family Involvement; *Fathers; Parent Attitudes; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Participation; *Parent Role; Preschool Children; *Puerto Ricans; Racial Differences; Social Support Groups
IDENTIFIERS *African Americans

ABSTRACT

This study documented 45 African-American and 40 Puerto Rican-American middle- to lower-middle-income fathers' involvement with their preschool children. Their styles of functioning within the family, and the support they received from their families and communities in their role as parents were also examined. The fathers completed three parental and family support questionnaires. Results indicate that African-American men's commitment to the family is positively associated with their statement of involvement with children and to their participation in child care. Puerto Rican-American men's commitment to the family is positively associated with socialization responsibility, availability within the home, and their statement of involvement with children. Indexes of familial and community support showed that African-American fathers' involvement with their preschoolers depended to a large extent on their support system of relatives, friends, and co-workers. Puerto Rican-American fathers who indicated high levels of involvement with their children were more likely to utilize institutional support, such as schools, clinics, and social service organizations, than family members, friends, or co-workers. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 368 490

ETHNIC PRESCHOOLERS: HOW THEIR FATHERS CAN BE MORE INVOLVED?

M. Ahmeduzzaman Ph. D.
Central Michigan University

Paper presented at the Annual conference of the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). November 10-13, 1993. Anaheim, Califirnia

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M. Ahmeduzzaman
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 022233

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ethnic Preschoolers: How Their Fathers Can Be More Involved

This research documented 45 African-American and 40 Puerto Rican-American middle to lower-middle-income fathers' involvement with their preschool-aged child in the home, their styles of functioning within the family, and the support they received from their families and communities for their role(s) as parents. Each father was asked to fill out the Paternal Child Care Index (PCCI) scale (Radin 1982), the Family Functioning Style (FFS) scale (Deal, Trivette & Dunst, 1988), and the Profile of Family Support (SSI) scale(Trivette & Dunst, 1988).

The Paternal Child Care Index (PCCI) developed by Radin (1982) assesses the father's a. Statement of Involvement, and involvement in b. Child care responsibility, c. Socialization responsibility, d. Influence in child rearing decisions, and e. availability. The Family Functioning Scale (FFS) assesses the extent of fathers' commitment to promoting the growth and well-being of the entire family, their ability to make sacrifices, their strategies for coping with difficult situations, their general competencies and problem- solving skills, and their ability to communicate constructively. Such an approach corresponds to the current focus in the family literature (see, Otto, 1975) that emphasizes the relevance of assessing interpersonal skills, competencies, and social psychological characteristics which are important features of families' unique functioning styles (see Williams, Lingren, Rowe, Van Zandt & Stinnet, 1985).

Because the extended family structure and its role in family organization has received a good deal of attention in the socialization literature and social support is associated with family functioning in African-American families and has been central to the organization of Puerto Rican-American families (Hays & Mindel, 1973; Hofferth, 1984; Manns, 1988; Wilson, 1986), the associations between support from extrafamilial, extended family members and institutions and men's involvement with children were examined. This is of importance because dimensions of support might be linked to paternal involvement with children in both groups of fathers.

Relationships between the PCCI and Functional Style within the Family

Pearson correlations were computed on the 5 components of the PCCI and the

5 dimensions of the FFS scales (Table 1). African-American men's commitment to the family was positively associated with their statement of involvement with children and to their participation in child care. Communication was positively associated with socialization responsibility and statement of involvement with children; and coping was positively associated with statement of involvement. These associations indicate that fathers' commitment, communication, and coping skills may be driving forces behind African-American fathers' positive involvement with their children. It is my surmise that the high degree of commitment to the family unit and good communication skills may contain social ingredients that can be readily and effectively used in caregiving situations.

Data also revealed that Puerto Rican-American men's commitment to the family was positively associated with socialization responsibility, availability within the home, and their statement of involvement with children; communication was significantly associated with socialization responsibility and availability within the home; while, cohesion was significantly related to fathers' statement of involvement.

These associations indicate that, in an effort to promote overall family well-being, Puerto Rican-American fathers' commitment to their families, their ability to communicate, and their preference for family cohesion may have acted in significant ways to foster fathers' involvement with their preschool-aged child. It can be argued that these fathers may have realized the importance of a positive family functioning style when it comes to the overall well being of their children and their investment in caregiving.

Relationship between PCCI and Social Support

For African-American men, convincing associations were found between support from extrafamilial members and socialization responsibility (r = .34, p<.01), statement of involvement (r = .35, p<.01), and investment in child care (r =.32, p<.05), and between extended family support and statement of involvement (r =.29, p<.05), and child care responsibility (r =.26,p<.08). Likewise, institutional support was correlated with fathers' statement of involvement (r =.32, p<.05).

Sources of support may not only enhance self-esteem, personal efficacy, and

perception of control (Hays & Mindel, 1973; McAdoo, 1981; Tienda & Angel, 1982), but may also reduce psychological distress (Taylor, Chatters, & May, 1988), and impart a positive influence on overall psychological well-being (see Hughes and Demo, 1989). These associations provide evidences that African-American fathers' involvement with their preschoolers depended to a large extent on their support system.

Data revealed that support emanated primarily from the men's parents and relatives, and only occasionally from church members. Additionally, extrafamilial sources of support like friends, neighbors, and co-workers were also sought by fathers. However, fathers rarely sought information about childrearing or services for children from health professionals or other agencies within their community.

Of the three modes of support for childrearing assessed in this study, only institutional support showed significant correlations with Puerto Rican-American fathers' statement of involvement with children (r=.40,p<.01) and their involvement in child care (r=.31,p<.05) (Table 1). That fewer than half of the Puerto Rican-American fathers approached relatives and friends for assistance and help in child care may suggest that familial bonds are becoming diffused on the mainland. With the nuclearization of Puerto Rican-American families on the mainland, individual family members may not maintain contact with kinship relations as would be the case in the traditional extended Puerto Rican family (Mapp, 1974). Moreover, in an effort to avoid negative stereotypes and discrimination and to maintain dignity (dignidad), Puerto Rican-American families may turn inward and rely on their own personal psychosocial resources to tackle issues inherent in parenting. As an alternative source of support, they however, have considered institutions such as day care/school, child/family doctor and other social service agencies as evidenced from the associations between institutional support, fathers' statement of involvement and their child care responsibilities.

The data presented herein should help broaden our conceptual/theoretical understanding of father's strength and support sources that abet or inhibit their socialization with preschoolers from diverse groups.

References Cited

Deal, A. G., Trivette, C. M., & Dunst, C. J. (1988). Family Functioning Style Scale. In C. Dunst, C. Trivette, & A. Deal (Eds.), Enabling an d empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Hays, W. C. & Mindel, C. H. (1973). Extended kinship relations in black and white families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 25, 51-57.

Hofferth, S. L. (1984). Kin network, race, and family structure. Journal of Marriage and the Family. 46, 791-806.

Hsu, F. L. K. (1963). Clan, Caste, and Club. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc.

Hughes, M., & Demo, D. H. (1989). Self perceptions of Black Americans: Self-esteem and personal efficacy. American Journal of Sociology, 95, 132-159.

Manns, W. (1988). Supportive roles of significant others in Black families. In H. P. McAdoo (Ed.), Black families (pp. 270-283). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Mapp, E. (Ed.) (1974). Puerto Rican Perspectives. Methuen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press Inc.

McAdoo, J. L. (1981). Black father and child interaction. In L. E. Gary (Ed.), Black Men (pp. 115-130). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Ogbu, J. (1983). Minority status and schooling in plural societies. Comparative Education Review, 27, 168-190.

Otto, H. A. (1975). The use of family strength concepts and methods in family life education: A handbook. Beverly Hills, CA: Holistic Press.

Radin, N. (1982). Parental Involvement in Childcare Index. University of Michigan: School of Social Works.

Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., & Mays, V. (1988). Parents, children, siblings, in-laws, and non-kin sources of emergency assistance to black Americans. Family Relations, 37, 298-304.

Tienda, M., & Angel, R. (1982). Determinants of extended household structure: Cultural pattern or economic need? American Journal of Sociology, 87, 1360-1383.

Trivette, C. M., & Dunst, C. J. (1988). Inventory of Social Support. In C.

Dunst, C. Trivette, & A. Deal (Eds.), Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Williams, R., Lingren, H., Rowe, G., Van Zandt, S., & Stinnett, N. (Eds.) (1985). Family strengths Enhancement of interaction. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Wilson, M. N. (1986). The black extended family: An analytical considerations. Developmental Psychology, 22, 246-258.